

## House Republican Press Release

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Press Office: 860-240-8700

### Statewide Medical Organization Honors Rep. Winkler for Healthcare Initiative



On Friday June 3, the Connecticut Society of Eye Physicians (CSEP) awarded its 2005 Vision Award to State Rep. Lenny Winkler, R-Groton in recognition of an initiative she introduced designed to protect people wearing contact lenses. The award, bestowed on Rep.

Winkler and State Rep. Kevin Ryan, D-Montville, (who co-introduced the legislation) is given to a legislator who initiated healthcare legislation to improve the safety or well being of Connecticut residents.

House Bill 6302, An Act Restricting The Sale Of Cosmetic Contact Lenses, now awaits final approval from Governor M. Jodi Rell. Under the bill, nonprescription contact lenses with colors or patterns may be sold at retail only under the supervision of a licensed optician and in a registered optical establishment, office, or store. It does not restrict the ability of licensed physicians trained and specializing in eye diseases or licensed optometrists, from dispensing contact lenses.

CSEP represents more than 300 Eye MDs in the State of Connecticut and their patients. It strives to ensure the best quality eye care for all the citizens of Connecticut through education and advocacy. "Representative Winkler has always been a leader in taking on worthy health care issues on her own and effectively working the legislative process," said Deborah A. Osborn, CSEP's executive director. "She worked diligently to have this initiative passed."

"I'm thrilled to have been honored for introducing this legislation," said Rep. Winkler. "Unfortunately, there is a problem of cosmetic contact lens being dispensed at certain outlets that are not qualified to do so. Improperly fitted or worn contact lenses can lead to serious medical conditions, even blindness, if untreated. This legislation helps ensure that only qualified professionals are permitted to dispense cosmetic contact lenses."

Under HB 6302, a violation would qualify as unfair trade practice under the Connecticut Unfair Trade Practice Act (CUTPA). This law prohibits businesses from engaging in unfair and deceptive acts or practices. It also allows individuals to sue. Courts may award actual and punitive damages, costs, reasonable attorneys fees and impose civil penalties of up to \$5,000 for willful violations.

